

VZCZCXRO3221  
PP RUEHAG RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHAH #0036 0091247  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 091247Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2092  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4657  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2460  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2325  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2905  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3199

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000036

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB  
USTDA FOR STEIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ECPS](#) [TX](#)  
SUBJECT: REPRIMAND OF TURKMENISTAN'S COMMUNICATIONS  
MINISTER, A COMMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE PUBLIC IMAGE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Richard Miles. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (U) President Berdimuhamedov reprimanded the Minister of Communications, Resulberdi Hojagurbanov, by a decree published in Neytralniy Turkmenistan on January 2, "for shortcomings in implementing the President's instructions for transmission of the New Year's greetings from the provinces."

The decree noted that faulty technology used in the official New Year's television transmission impaired the quality of transmitted sound, and ended with a warning that the President would fire the Minister if he neglected to take necessary corrective actions. One example of what happened is that viewers of the program were unable to hear an elderly citizen of the Ahal province during his congratulatory speech. At the end of his speech, the technical problem was resolved.

¶2. (C) Head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Resident, Neil McKain, told the Director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency Europe and Eurasia, Daniel Stein, that he had heard that Hojagurbanov has contacts in Turkmenistan's security agencies that will likely protect him from losing his job.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The decree underscores the importance the president places on maintaining a positive public image -- especially as it concerns technology. The presidential administration was likely very embarrassed by this gaffe. The fact that Hojagurbanov is unlikely to be fired is an indication of the influence that security agencies have in even the most distant ministries. END COMMENT.  
MILES